

Notes from Pathways Ad Hoc Committee, September 2, 2009

By a vote of six-to-five, the ad hoc committee approved the idea of expanding some roadways along the projected route to make room for a pathway as part of the transit stimulus proposal submitted to the federal government.

All 11 committee members were present at the meeting.

Chair Gary Kuhl asked Bryan Cooper to walk members through the proposal.

Lynn Fisher questioned the multi-modal part of the proposal which ties the parkway to transit needs.

Bryan replied that he supplied statistics culled from various sources that support the concept.

The committee then discussed whether or not pathways in Biscayne Park roadways could meet Florida statutory needs outlining parameters on pedestrian and bicycle path construction. Biscayne Park liability was one possible problem that people brought up.

The committee discussed whether there could be exceptions and why pathways in some jurisdictions, such as North Miami, seemed not to adhere to the parameters.

John Ise volunteered to contact a Miami-Dade County's staff person who deals specifically with pathway and bikeway issues to see if we can get our questions addressed before going forward.

It was questioned whether a pathway needed to be bordered by a curb, among other questions.

Bryan pointed out that smaller municipalities may have some conditions waived.

Victor Romano said that he was concerned whether 115th Street would have the width to support a pathway and added that he had heard from a number of 114th Street neighbors with concerns about the proposal, and he said, he would be reluctant to impose changes that could impact the quality of life of fellow residents in the face of so much opposition.

Barbara Kuhl added that taking swales would involve a lot of peoples' driveways and where people are used to parking.

Jane Ansley mentioned that utilizing the big median on 8th Court via 113th Street could mitigate problems with the narrowness of 115th Street.

Bryan Cooper said that two problems would be it would deviate from the direct route between Village Hall and the Rec Center, a key component of accessing *transit* stimulus funds and 113th Street is a more heavily travelled vehicular route.

Dan Keys said he thought there were problems with the basic premise of accessing the grant by citing intermodal needs. In any case, he said he thinks that the big median on 8th Avenue is the one that really has space for a pathway.

Bryan noted that people are going to use the roads anyway to walk and bike regardless, and the plan would just be a first step to build on and help access other grants. He said he was open to a lot of

possibilities and it would be a shame if we couldn't come up with some way to use the money. Ideas that could be further explored include small refuges on the medians where pedestrians could get away from cars; speed tables and signage.

Chuck Ross agreed that we should explore signing and possibly widening streets, along with looking at street closures and lowering speed limits.

John Ise said he liked the idea of signage, traffic calming measures and widening the roadways for pedestrian purposes while narrowing the road for cars.

The committee agreed that it is crucial to find out from professionals what, by statute, etc., we can and cannot do given Biscayne Park's physical reality.

There was some discussion of the committee's mission, with several members reminding others that once we have made decisions about this plan, we have been charged to look at greenway-walkway possibilities village-wide.

There was some discussion of whether we could make a problem vis-a-vis ADA requirements by calling our path a pedestrian walkway, but, if we could instead meet our goals by proposing a bikeway alone -- and there would be nothing stopping people from walking in the bikeway.

Dan suggested that we should determine who would actually use the pathway, and proposed a variety of ways to regularize the medians and right-of-ways, such as plantings and elevations.

Karen Cohen said she thought that we should do the least intrusive changes in order to not preclude further pathway development that would not be bound by transit stimulus money. For example, to cul-d-sac 115th Street might make is difficult to cul-de-sac 116th, where the bigger median might attract more walkers, etc.

Commissioner Steve Bernard, sitting in the audience, made that comment that one way to go was to look at ways to mitigate unsafe conditions rather than to narrow our options at this point.

However, after soliciting comments from every member, the chair called for a vote on expanding the roadway, without explicitly choosing either the median or the swale area.

Bryan then requested the committee look again at the ideas that came out of an informal meeting held shortly after the workshop. John Ise suggested the committee use that as a starting place.

Karen noted that the meeting was not official, there was no notice and it did not formally represent a consensus, though there was nothing wrong with going through those points again.

Victor noted that making things safer for pedestrians, while laudable, might not meet the requirements of the transit stimulus requirements.

The committee adjourned having decided to look again at the under-the-tree conclusions, anticipate more information from the county on roadway width issues, and look at traffic calming measures that everyone would likely agree on.